

Health and Disability News

A publication of the Office on Health and Disability
Massachusetts Department of Public Health



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OHD Conference Coming March 20th!

Don't miss this conference! People with disabilities, service providers, and policy makers will learn about and discuss strategies to promote health across the life span for adults with disabilities. We are bringing together people from both the elder health and disability communities, to share models, strategies and resources that can benefit us all. Major recent initiatives and issues affecting healthy living in the community for adults and elders with disabilities will be discussed, including:

- Healthy People 2010 for people with disabilities;
- health care models that integrate acute and long term care;
- universal design;
- medical education initiatives:

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Welcome to Health and Disability News

We're excited to bring you this publication, targeted at our colleagues both within and outside the Department of Public Health. We plan to publish this newsletter twice a year, to keep you informed about our work in promoting health for people with disabilities and chronic conditions in Massachusetts as well as the latest developments in the

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Breakthrough 4 Report Released







The mission of the Office on Health and Disability (OHD) of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) is to promote the health and well being of people with disabilities and chronic conditions in Massachusetts.

Welcome

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field. We'll also let you know how you can participate, whether by making a program more accessible, learning skills such as how to use a TTY, or contributing to policy discussions.

We'd love your feedback. Please send comments to Lisa Maisels, Director of Health Education and Media (lisa.maisels@state.ma.us).

Cheryl Bushnell, Acting Director, DSHN

Good News, Bad News: Big Changes for OHD

We are very sad to report that Deborah Allen, Director of the Division for Special Health Needs (DSHN), the home of OHD, is leaving. Where is she going? To the Health and Disability Working Group (HDWG) at the Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH). The director of HDWG, Carol Tobias, sits on the OHD Advisory Council, so we hope to continue to see lots of Debby. Debby will also be accepting an appointment in the Maternal and Child Health Department at BUSPH.

We appreciate Debby's leadership and vision, especially during those years that the OHD Director position went unfilled.

We are very pleased to report that Cheryl Bushnell, OHD's Director, has been appointed Acting Director of DSHN! We look forward to Cheryl's leadership and her renowned ability to beat the drum for disability rights...



Does Your Program Serve People with Disabilities?

The Office on Health and Disability has a cross department mission to promote health and wellness among people with disabilities in Massachusetts. The mission includes making public health professionals aware of a new approach to disability in public health. Traditionally, people with disabilities were considered "sick" — prevention had failed — and so were not included in health promotion programs. Now we realize that people with disabilities can also live healthy lives when primary and preventive care services are accessible and the environment accommodates a wide range of abilities.

OHD has programs in place to assist DPH programs to include people with disabilities in their program development, evaluation and implementation. For more information, contact Cheryl Bushnell, Acting Director, DSHN at 617/624-5967 (voice); 617/624-5992 (TTY).

OHD Conference Coming Up

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- Olmstead; and
- major new interagency collaborations.

The conference will be held at the Holiday Inn Select, Government Center, Boston from 9:30 – 5:00.

If you haven't received the brochure and registration form already, call AdCare Educational Institute at 508/752-7313 (voice) or 508/754-0039 (TTY).

People with disabilities are more likely to be at risk of smoking, obesity, and poor health outcomes such as depression, diahetes and heart disease than people without disabilities



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Breakthrough Report on Adults with Disabilities Released

An important part of our mission at OHD is to collect and disseminate data, in order to measure the prevalence of disability and identify health and related needs of people with disabilities. We recently published the first-ever report on adults with disabilities in Massachusetts, A Profile of Massachusetts Adults with Disabilities, I 998-2000: Results from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. This report can be found on the web at http://www.state.ma.us/dph/bfch/bfchpubs/disable00.pdf.

Based on over 17,000 interviews, the report highlights some serious health issues for adults with disabilities. Adults with disabilities were more likely to smoke, more likely to report that pain limited their activities, and more likely to report being sad, blue or depressed. Among women aged 18-59, women with disabilities were more likely to have experienced intimate partner abuse and sexual assault. Findings like these underscore the critical need for a broad range of health promotion efforts for people with disabilities.

To receive this newsletter in an alternative format, contact Lisa Maisels at lisa.maisels@state.ma.us.